

Only

Dying



A spectra is haunting our neighborhood-

and this spectra is homelessness. They hide in our alleys, behind or bushes, and in our sewers, always trying to avoid the watchful eye of justice. Sometimes though, we can't help but catch glimpses of them...unfortunately. "Is this what we want our kids to see? I don't want my kids living here anymore". Says Dan Moler, with good reason.

Working citizens spend their entire lives working themselves to the brink, to provide for themselves and their families. Why should the nuclear dream be ruined by drug addicted skids living on the corner and in our parks? The saddest thing is these people are so far-gone that they don't even care about how they ruin the aesthetics of our neighbourhoods! Our dreams can't be fulfilled because we have hurdles to overcome. Paddy Geary

Why don't we help these people by gathering them up and transporting them to centers, where they can have the chance to become productive again? We can teach them proper workplace and social etiquette, and even proper job skills.

The degree a lon society seems so high that apathetic slackers are everywhere, ruining the dreams of the working class. Residents suggest that: "peoples level of civilization is measured by how they look after their less fortunate." Right they are.

Such a proposition wouldn't even take up tax dollars, because the newly re-educated workers can work for below minimum wage, with the government garnishing their wages. The solution sound simple enough, but there will be those who resist our generous offer. Few avenues are left for those, so why don't we just feed them to the ones in the re-education program? The re-educated can be re-introduced into society at no cost to the society itself. A local public forum was recently held on the issue of the homelessness.

Not a single homeless person showed up. They feel persecuted and intimidated right now." Said Maple Ridge Salvation Army Captain Kathie Chiu. And so they should. Society is finally showing initiative in taking responsibility to help those that wont help themselves.

Maybe the means won't be pretty, but they are undoubtedly necessary. Our children shouldn't have to grow up seeing such an eyesore; a shopping buggy spectacle day after day.

-Richard

©NOT EVERYTHING THAT COUNTS CAN BE COUNTED

Abh...the battle between the homeful and the homeless. Those comfortably content within their IKEAN society, and the others who don't have these luxuries because they don't feel they need them. I mean, they've beaten a trench around this bush deep enough to build a scrap metal roof over and solve the problem, but that's beside the point, I guess. Because supposedly, they've tried everything, and they've exhausted every idea to the point where they're merely throwing in the towel now, and whoever wants to roll it up and use it as a pillow can go right ahead. I mean, they've tried loading up all the eyesores into a van and driving them out to the middle of the country in the middle of the night then kicking them out the door in a drug filled haze as the van still flies down Loughheed at 90 clicks - that always works with an unwanted pet - but for some reason they manage to sniff their way back to the alley they call home by morning. They've tried just allowing them to use their drugs freely, and providing them with a sanitary environment from which to do so in hopes of.... well, I'm not exactly sure, but that hasn't seemed to solve the problem either.

But that's the thing. What is the problem exactly? I mean, what is the homeless people's problem, because that's the one that needs to be addressed in order to deal with the "more important problem" of the eyesore factor inflicted upon our law-abiding citizens, am I right? Well, the way I see it, it stems from the idea that we live in a world that is completely owned. I mean, No Name is a name brand and flavorless is a flavor. Every single thing has a shiny price tag hanging from it with a logo that's been stamped upon it by some drugged up teenager in a tiny run down warehouse in some town you've never heard of, and they're sick of having to think about this money driven world all day long. They do not want to "buy" a house, they do not want to "get a job" because every home available to them was built by someone else for someone else, and lived in until they didn't want it anymore, where it was subsequently dumped on dozens of other tenants who have stained the premises beyond originality. But bottom line, it's not theirs, and any job available to them is within an over-crowded, under worthy field, where a person is constantly reminded - by the grease stains or gasoline splattering up their arm as they "drop more fries" or "fill'er up" - that they know better than this.

We will not demean ourselves simply because someone else was here first and we will always be bitter about the fact that when the Earth was giving out its "unlimited resources" you guys claimed it all for yourselves before we even had an embryonic chance, and now there's nothing. So how do you cure this sickness of one knowing better?

How do we solve the problem and help these people "get with the program"? First off, by understanding that this is not a problem, nor a sickness, but merely a logical reaction to the world around us that's being devoured to voraciously and forces us to change so suddenly, adapting like chameleons. We are an accelerated evolution caused by this "information age" as we've "named" it, and we perpetually continue to accelerate.

And this is good.

This is a solution.

We are called to love the loveless, the unlovely and the unlovable

To love without jealousy, design or threat.

We are called to relationship, engagement and hope

So together we can bring change,

So together we can move towards affordable housing

In our community, province and world.

What is the hunger within us

That longs to be anchored in home?

What is this drive that keeps us striving

With housing for all as its goal?

It's a passion for justice and equality

That has rooted and taken hold,

It's a calling to live with compassion

That resonates deep in our soul.

The stability which we long for

Has qualified some of us know -

Friendly, inviting, cheerful, calm

Peaceful, personal and secure.

The housing we hope for nurtures life

And satisfies mind, spirit and soul.

In contrast the housing we witness

More often has qualities that damn.

Bare indifferent surroundings,

Bodies packed in tight,

A night on the concrete that chills one

Complete with fumes and light.

Devices to protect and nurture

Given in an assembly line

Enhance the pain and separation.

The protection is numbing of mind.

Without house to come to

Life can be lived in a paper bag.

Possessions are hauled in a knap sack

Sleep is fleeting and restlessness marks the days.

So today as we remember the fallen

The ones who have passed from our sight

We recommit to the notion

That housing for all is a right.

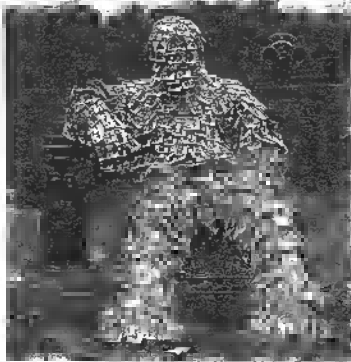
Bonnie Briggs, Kerre Briggs, Sara Boyles

I WILL NEVER BE HOMELESS,
IT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME.
I WILL NEVER BE HOMELESS
I'M DOING SO WELL, DON'T WORRY
I HAVE A GOOD JOB, A NICE HOUSE AND
A CAR, I HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED TO
GO FAR. I AM NOT LIKE THOSE WELFARE
BUMS, TO WHO PROSPERITY NEVER COMES.
YOU KNOW, THE ONES WHO DON'T WANT TO
WORK, ANY KIND OF PHYSICAL
LABOUR THEY SHIRK. ALL THEY WANT
TO DO IS DRINK, SOME ARE NOT LIKE
AND THEY STINK. THEN, I SEE A MAN,
HE IS IN THE STREET, A TATTERED COAT
AROUND HIM AND NO SHOES ON HIS FEET.
I THINK THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG,
THAT SOMEHOW, THIS MAN DOES NOT BELONG.
SO I DECIDE TO STOP AND SAY 'HELLO', AND ASK
HIM WHY HE FEELS SO LOW. HE ONCE WORKED
ON A STREET CALLED BAY, MAKING GOOD MONEY
EVERY DAY. THEN ONE DAY HIS JOB WAS GONE.
HE WAS TOLD, 'JUST GO ON HOME.' HE SOON
JUST DIDN'T CARE, HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE
IS GONE. HE LOST HIS FAMILY, HIS
HOME, AND HIS CAR. IN JUST A FEW MONTHS,
HE FEELS SO FAR. SO HERE HE WAS,
ON THE STREET, WITH A TATTERED
COAT AROUND HIM AND NO
SHOES ON HIS FEET.
THEN I SAW THE LINES
ON HIS FACE
AND THE PAIN
IN HIS EYES,
I WILL NEVER
BE HOMELESS,
WILL I?

okay, so here's a question: within this polyphagian society, there are countless people who still manage to suffer from malnutrition, believe it or not. now, when a person is experiencing severe malnourishment, which is the result of inadequate intake of calories from vitamins, minerals, and proteins, their skin becomes pale, thick, dry and bruises easily. Not to mention the fact that rashes and changes in pigmentation are quite common. Also, an individual's hair becomes thin, tightly curled, and pulls out easily. joints ache, and bones are reduced to a soft tender state. visual disturbances include: night blindness, and increased sensitivity to light and glare. within the person's mouth itself, the gums begin to bleed, not to mention the tongue may be swollen, or shriveled and cracked. other symptoms of malnutrition include: anemia, diarrhea, disorientation, loss of reflexes, lack of coordination, muscle twitches, scaling, and cracking of the lips and mouth. now, this definitely sounds like a serious health issue, does it not? so anyways, my question. my question is: don't we live in canada? isn't this the boastful land where every citizen is entitled to free health care? why are we being forced to spend a substantial amount of our income, on "medication" to prevent the spread of "disease"? now, i am not going to be illogical, and state that all food should be free, but shouldn't there be a basic supplement that is free, but that also allows an individual to maintain the proper levels of vitamins, minerals, and proteins? does this not make sense? what doesn't make sense to me is seeing people starve and die on the streets, while someone else is getting special care over a paper cut.

...but that's just my point of view.

so, our economy is thriving like it never has before, and our technological advancements have reached a point where there is a "Rube Goldbergian" invention for every single action that the human mind can fathom. okay, so...can we stop now? i mean, wasn't that the point of all these inventions in the first place? so that mankind could gain control over his (or her) environment and live comfortably within it? i think we've accomplished that. i mean, when we're basically putting clocks or radios in stuff simply to get our name behind a new product, i think we can safely say we've reached the peak of our personal comfort. no, wait - i can do better than that - when you can lay upon a nasa formulated



mattress that contours to your frame for optimum support, while laying beneath imported silk sheets and by clapping your hands, the lights shut off - or even further, by voice command you shut the lights off, AND adjust the thermostat AND set your alarm, then i think it's bluntly obvious that we have reached the peak of our own personal comfort. or better yet, when you're lounging on your leather, reclining couch, with electrodes strapped to your muscles, working them electronically, and pills that maintain a proper nutritional and emotional norm. meanwhile, dinner's cooking itself in the kitchen, and you are watching a live broadcast from across the globe on a life-size, true colour flat screen tv with surround sound that submerges you in the event - then, beyond any shadow of a doubt, we have reached the pinnacle of human comfort and contentment. so anyways, i'll return to my point: can we stop now? when is enough, enough? can't we just give everyone everything they need to live comfortably, so that we may finally move on to more important things, whatever they may be. because the way things are right now, we're not going anywhere any time soon, and we're not about to get any more comfortable.

Breakfast & Shower Program
@ Collingwood Neighbourhood House
5288 Joyce Street

Saturdays

7:00am to 8:00am

Shower Facilities & Clothing Program

8:00am - 10:00am - Hot Breakfast

Starting January 22nd, 2005

For more information, please call 604-435-0323

Two Billion people live on less than \$2 a day • Two billion people in situations here • 1 billion have no clean water • nearly one billion are severely malnourished or starving • In 1981, there was one food bank in Canada, in 1991, there were 292 across Canada • In 1960, 50% of the 75,000 Canadians in mental hospitals were hospitalized for more than seven years, today 9 out of 10 patients are hospitalized for less than one month.

The media does not have the right to tell you what to do!!!!!! it is only their job to entertain, provoke and inform. So then where have all the free thinkers gone? why have we let ourselves be blinded so easily into submission. It is shocking to see how many people actually care that Jlo and Ben split up, or that Mary Kate and Ashley are having trouble, when billions of people are suffering the pains of poverty, some of them right in our own town. Why? Because the truth hurts. This fabulous web of entertainment chews us up and spits us out like the way a refined sugar leaves us craving for more. After all, the world that they hold before you is easier on the eyes.... You are never asked to take part, you don't even have to move, you never have to make the slightest effort to care, you have the controller... but are you really in control? It would seem that as the suffering of the worlds poor increases, so too does our deeply seeded guilt and our growing lust for an escape from reality. Like some kind of sick game we hunt down celebrities to the death, analyzing everything they do... So we can better ourselves through consuming the things they do.

Should we not be seeking out those who actually need attention?

Should we not be analyzing who we are and what we can accomplish rather than what Paris Hilton has accomplished?

The reason for our unbalanced attention spans has much to do with fear. We fear that if we really addressed the problems, that we might have to give up all of our beautiful fantasies. We fear that if we looked at poverty in the eye, we will be left feeling more uncomfortable than we were before. Our attempt at a squeaky clean euphoria has only left us with blood on our hands.

People are severely malnourished or starving • In 1981, there was one food bank in Canada, in 1991, there were 292 across Canada • In 1960, 50% of the 75,000 Canadians in mental hospitals were hospitalized for more than seven years, today 9 out of 10 patients are hospitalized for less than one month.

revolving tower,
Skyscrapers, and buildings alike.

Ever wonder what the most consumed good has become? Ever stare at the most intolerable sights living has to offer? Why would it matter... besides the lack of decency is tossed, as if garbage day is again been put on strike. Sick, to live inside a filth, made from others... as if they put you there. Questionable, a misp-interpreted orientation of our true surroundings. B-leeding eyes never lie, only lay still. Catastrophe, left in the dark. Is reality this illusionary? Have we protested those less lucky enough? Has the means of a identity been ripped from our fallen brothers and sisters?

While I sit comfortably within my accumulated self-idealistic world, I can hear a large sigh gasping from beneath my lungs. As if there's already too much to say... And yet, I'm broken. Broken, to the already discerned content swayed, inside our false world. What is left for the vultures, if not dried up fields... A forgotten realm of prosperity that's been, drained, and re-fueled by a grander scheme. While dying countries, die.. And famished seas drown. The sadest part, is while all this happens, we're positive, with a notion that something can be done. While, we sit back inside our homes, with our television, watching cnn or some random broadcasting show about the steps made to improve drastic living measures. Shanties.. Cropped-up housings made from styrofoam, cardboard, and miscellaneous findings. The true slumb of migrant camps, set abroad along less popular nations.

Why even see this reckless abandonment, impoverished nations, and dying victims? While, countless of junkies heroine attics, cokehead anonymous, are strutting around a futile void of past regrets. While, malnourished, and desecrated lives are constantly broken by shattering eyes. Penalized, abandoned.. A valuable lesson, less deserved. Yet, continuously we seek redemption from buried souls, we cannot yet to understand, the value of which the silence has brought. For a man as broken as those on foot, a man travelled inside his own unsightly surroundings. Sympathize you can try, but the matter, is true... They, wouldn't be anywhere without our guidance. Their choice is simple, life and freedom, scrapping for the left-overs of those more suitable for existence, or traverse the mighty sea and die from less tolerable environments. Is this not just the inanity of which insanity is deluted? For a weak life is left cold, the casualty is left to those who chose to walk past without acknowledging what has become.

I butt perched precariously on a speck of blue in the apple of Creation's eye. Wobbling wantonly... Oh! Don't fall down! I have seen them on the spair, not Jacob's ladder where Angels do descend, nor to lofty heights they aspire to transcend. "In God we trust!" All others pay cash! Heard entoned. In the East End the crack does command go but no longer speak of Michelangelo. I have smelled them all already, smelled them all... from thresholds and laneways wafts the crack, curls against window panes, arches its back, licks its black torn lips, turns, and returns slyly into the dark. A wiff of "Don't know what?" I too have seen them stare beneath the cracks. I cannot brag. "I know their pain" Like most, I've known mere disdain for the desperate in their despair. "They choose their risk" or so I'm told. The what Gene's quote? Or how many flubs? On which give it were, be it labyrinth maze or multiple choice? I still don't know... The choice to be born, no one chooses. To die alone, our only true choice.

Profuse apologies to Sir Alfred Prufrock.

EVOLUTION OCCURS THROUGH VICTIMS

THE MEAK SHALL
INHERIT THE EARTH

Seems it's my time now. i won't put up a fight. i'll go easy, don't worry. i want to see what's on the other side. i want to see if it's any different there than here. i wonder if i'll meet nixon anyway.

there are some things i'm glad i lived through. these streets are ~~dirty~~ diseased, but there's something crudely romantic about them. i got to live a truly more animal life than most. have you ever foraged? i have. and there's no better satisfaction than finding your own meals.

you know how to keep warm in the winter by putting on a sweater and turning up the heat. i know how to keep warm with a leaf shelter in the park, and nature provides amazing ~~insulation~~ insulation when used properly.

i wonder if i'll meet any of you who decided i wasn't worth your time. don't worry, i didn't take it personally. i guess i could've gotten a job. i guess i could've joined up and gotten lost as a cog. but i'd just prefer to be lost as a human, you know?

never even had a coffee at starbuck's. i wonder what that shit tastes like, if it lives up to the hype or the price. oh well.

here's two words rarely ever heard together: homelessness abuse. you know what i'm talking about. you and a bunch of buddies go stumbling down the street, after a few drinking games at the local pub, played around pitchers of the finest ale, loud and obnoxious and falling over each other as you tread onwards, in your flashy new gear, sneakers, and bling bling, when suddenly, out of the corner of your blurred vision, you see a heap of old clothes breathing, and garbage bags strewn around. now, the normal and logical reaction, for any citizen with morals would be to feel sorry for the man's situation, and continue onwards a little less merry. but no. you decide to run over, and with your shiny new AIR jordan's, kick the defenseless sleeping "bastard" right where you're certain his gut is in a vain attempt at impressing your friends, who quickly join in a vain attempt at impressing you. kicking away to the silent rhythm of a rap tune, playing in all their heads. yeah. it's like that, yo. it's like that. feel the genuine leather fly through the AIR as you deliver more internal bleeding, hear the final gasp of AIR escape the victim's lungs, smell the AIR - the stench of death - when his lifeless corpse rolls of your bloody shoes...damn, look at those shoes...

We provide affordable housing to those facing multi-barriers and who may often be living in substandard housing or in either an unsafe or unhealthy environment. We are a consumer-driven mental health organization which is open to anyone who has experienced the mental health system in a personal way. We are peers helping each other without the detached professionalism which tends to encourage "learned helplessness." We live cooperatively and respect each other's property, rights and space while at the same time maintaining a healthy balance in giving and taking. This kind of sharing is fundamental to there not being class distinctions while at the same time avoiding exploitation. We share our talents, abilities and resources to develop practical life-skills and self-help rehabilitation that focuses on "Wellness through Social Interaction." We volunteer at helping each other as peer counselors, coordinators and life skills assistants. We take on all tasks from shopping, laundry, and cleaning to group facilitation and office work. We, the members, employ the principles of participatory democracy in decision making in areas such as house rules, requests to be forwarded to Unity Council Meetings, and who moves into the house. We reward outstanding volunteers with small incentives and honorariums. We recognize the "wholeness of human life" and are concerned about all issues related to effective living. We recognize the fundamental dignity of all people. We are dedicated to awakening the whole community to the possibilities of increased mental health for all. We make every effort to avoid creating a cumbersome and needlessly expensive bureaucracy. We use funds and create budgets democratically. We recognize that treatment and medication decisions should be left between the members and their doctor/therapist. Unity Housing Society is funded by the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board and operates six communal houses located in the East side of Vancouver. You could help provide this new and exciting self-help housing opportunity to those who need it most. If you are a mental health consumer (or know of one), who is seeking safe, secure and affordable housing and wishes to improve his/her social skills and be part of a supportive community please call for further information or to arrange for an interview. For more details, and contact information, go to: www.unityhousing.ca

Donations are greatly appreciated.

UNITY HOUSING

it's really hard to make a person FEEL for a homeless person, but let's try one final stab at it. bear with me, and please read on without bias, and hopefully with a somewhat open mind. okay, everyone knows (or thinks they know) the feeling of being a child lost in a shopping mall or grocery store, a scary thought, no doubt. wandering around helpless and unaware, all sorts of strangers staring at you. the overwhelming sensation of being alone in the world. well it's not too much different for a homeless person, except for the fact that in most cases there's no one looking for them, no parents three aisles over - searching frantically for their baby - and no security guards in flashy uniforms ready to lend a helping hand. just stop and think about it for a moment. feel it. here are just a few of the many people out there who ARE offering a helping hand. feel free to contact all and any of the organizations listed if you have anything to contribute. (energy is equal to money)

HOMELESS RESEARCH VIRTUAL LIBRARY (www.hrvl.ihpr.ubc.ca) • **ShelterNet BC** (www.shelternetbc.ca) • **GVRD Homeless Research Data** (www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness/research.htm) • **BC Homelessness & Research Network** (www.bchrm.ihpr.ubc.ca) • **Mental Patients Association** (www.vmpa.org/index.htm) • **Lookout Emergency Aid Society** (www.lookoutsociety.bc.ca/) • **PovNet** (www.povnet.org) • **Vancouver Native Health Society** (www.vnhs.net) • **Regional Homeless Plan for Greater Vancouver** ([www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/010918/rr1\(b\).htm](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/010918/rr1(b).htm)) • **Crisis Organization** (www.crisis.org.uk) • **Angels on E-Bikes** (www.geocities.com/angelsonebikes/index.html) • **Kettle Friendship Society** (www.thekettle.ca) • **S.P.I.T. (Squeezed Punks In Traffic)** (www.spit.ca) • **Housing In Canada** (<http://housingagain.web.ca/index.html>) • **Health Impact On Homeless** (www.oma.org/health/homeless.htm) • **Helping The Homeless: Where do we go From Here?** by John R. Belcher and Frederick A. DiBlassio • **Under The Viaduct: Homeless in Beautiful BC** by Sheila Baxter • **Everyone Loves a Good Draught: Stories From India's Poorest Villages** by P. Sainath, and of course **Formerly Homeless Memorial Site** (www.geocities.com/hommem/homepage.htm)

JESUS SAVES!

I NEED TO SHAVE, I NEED TO SHIT

I NEED TO EAT! not take a hit

I lost my job...

and gained the street. With just
the clothes on my back and shoes
on my feet. I know its hard to

BELEIVE IM WHITE COLLAR.

PLEASE MAN, GIVE ME A DOLLAR?

- Nameless

ODmagazine Volume One Issue Three Near Solstice 2005

Contributors/Owners/Staff: Axis (I), Richard (II), Mr.Morder
(III,V), f4merlyhomeless (IV), Girl In The Tree (VI), Misspeld
(VII.I), FlashGordon (VII.II), Runt (IIX.1), EndlessNameless
(X), e-mail: ODmagazine@canada.com

all rights reserved, no portions may be reproduced without
permission. All material is original although most is inspired
by others. comments/suggestions/ideas/submissions e-mail us.
individual e-mails, and past issues available online at:

www.ODmagazine.vze.com

Next issue, due out eventually...available strictly by coincidence